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Yosemite National Park

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Yosemite News Release

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## **Yosemite National Park Unveils Fuel Cell Demonstration Project**

In a project that demonstrates the benefit of working in partnership, Yosemite National Park with the Construction Engineering Research Laboratory (CERL) of the US. Army Corps of Engineers is studying the feasibility of fuel cell uses in the park.

Yosemite National Park has installed a 5-kilowatt fuel cell at the National Park Service Administration Building in Yosemite Valley. The fuel cell uses propane to start the process that creates both electricity and heat that will supplement the building's normal power and heat supply. The only other by-product is water.

Fuel cells are an excellent energy option for the administration building in Yosemite Valley. Other choices, such as solar energy, are not viable in the deep valley that does not always receive direct sunlight.

"The motivation to install a fuel cell was to demonstrate the usefulness of the technology for unique power applications in Yosemite," said Kent Summers, Yosemite National Park electrician. "We have several remote sites in the park where we need to supply power. Fuel cells are quieter and more environmentally friendly than their diesel counterparts."

The CERL Fuel Cell Program, managed by Dr. Michael Binder, supplied the background expertise for project's conception and design, funded initialization of construction and installation, wrote and managed the installation contract, and sourced the rare propane-fueled Proton Exchange Membrane fuel cell. CERL is funding approximately half of the total project cost.

The fuel cell will reduce the use of power provided through the grid. It also reduces the demand on backup generators during times of grid outage.

"It is important that Yosemite National Park embraces fuel cells. By developing and experimenting with these new energy sources, we can refine these technologies for wider use," said Michael Tollefson, Yosemite National Park Superintendent. "The National Park Service needs to be among the innovators of clean, quiet, and efficient energy sources."

Yosemite National Park and CERL employees will monitor the output of the fuel cell. The park plans to use the fuel cell as an educational tool for the visitors, including school groups.

This is part of the Green Energy Parks Program, a joint initiative between the Department of Interior and the Department of Energy. The program is designed to promote the use of energy efficient and renewable energy technologies and practices in the National Park Service and showcase these efforts to the visitors. Electric vehicles, photovoltaic systems throughout the park, and using re-refined oil are some examples of this green effort in Yosemite National Park.

Yosemite National Park has also benefited from additional partners in this project that have provided services and expertise. They include Plug Power Inc. (the manufacturer), LOGANEnergy Corp, the Propane Education and Research Council (PERC), and Campora Inc.

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From Left to Right, Kirk Vinings, Plug Power, Frank Holcomb, US Army Engineer Research & Development Center, Michael Tollefson, Yosemite National Park Superintendent, Congressman George Radanovich (R-CA), George Collard, Logan Energy Corporation



George Collard of Logan Energy Corporation and Kent Summers of Yosemite National Park explain the operation of the Plug Power propane-fueled fuel cell.